

REMARKS

Claims 41-48 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 19-28 and 32-34 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, merely for the purpose of expediting prosecution.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the courtesies extended by Examiner Ragonese and SPE Bennett on March 1, 2005. As a result of the interview, Applicants submit that all pending issues regarding claims 41-48 have been addressed and obviated. Allowance of pending claims 41-48 is respectfully requested.

1. Election Requirement

Claims 41-48 were withdrawn because of an election requirement in the Office Action dated December 23, 2004. The election requirement is hereby traversed.

As discussed in the interview and set forth in the Interview Summary of March 1, 2005, election between claims 41-48 and 19 should not be required and claims 41-48 have been or should be rejoined. Withdrawal of the election requirement is hereby requested.

2. 35 U.S.C. §112, First Paragraph

The Office Action rejects claims 21 and 41-48 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. Claim 21 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, therefore the rejection of claim 21 is moot. The rejection of claims 41-48 is hereby traversed.

As discussed in the interview and set forth in the Interview Summary, support for claims 41-48 can be found in paragraph [0049] to overcome the §112 rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection is hereby requested.

3. 35 U.S.C. §§102/103

The Office Action rejects claims 19-22, 24-27 and 32-33 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Howell et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,743,251). The Office Action also rejects claims 23, 28 and 34 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Howell et al in view of Armer et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,954,047). Claims 19-28 and 32-34 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, therefore the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a) are moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

4. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 41-48, as discussed in the interview of March 1, 2005, have been or should be rejoined and the 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph rejection has been obviated. Thus, allowance of claims 41-48 is hereby requested.

From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner feel that any issues remain, it is requested that the undersigned be contacted so that any such issues may be adequately addressed and prosecution of the instant application expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

Date: March 4, 2005

By: 

Laura L. Lee
Registration No. 48,752

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620